

States, this effort on the part of doctors to show us a way to a biologic understanding of ourselves, is more important to us now and in the future than any other national or international situation, because physical health and mental well-being are indispensable if our civilization continues to progress. Then, if a certain degree of national mental well-being can be attained in future years, together with a more relaxed pace of living, a more peaceful community life will necessarily evolve. And it is even feasible that only through universal physical and mental health can the prophet's dream of a war-free world materialize.

The American doctor of medicine, then, dedicating his mind and strength to the prevention of premature organic deterioration in his fellow citizens, and to intercepting processes of deterioration in those victimized by disease, with ever increasing emphasis upon both, particularly the first, shall continue to be, but in a greater capacity, the Moses who leads his followers from the wilderness of physical devastation to a land more promising of organic protection, physical health, and mental superiority through knowledge and hygienic living.

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#### REFERENCES

*Statistics:* World Almanac, 1940; American Year Book, 1940; Reports of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care.

*Magazines:* Hygeia, 1940; American Journal of Public Health; Scientific American, 1940; Science News Letters; Science Monthly.

*Books:* "The Fight for Life," De Kruif; "20th Century Psychiatry," William White; "Our Children in a Changing World," Erwin Wexberg; "A Short Introduction to the History of Human Stupidity," W. B. Pitkin; "The March of Medicine," Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur; "Your Diet and Your Health," Fishbein; "The Patient's Dilemma," Cabot.

## CLINICAL NOTES AND CASE REPORTS

### OAK POISONING: CAUSE-REMOVING TREATMENT

By EDWIN F. PATTON, M. D.  
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**M**OST prevailing treatments of oak and ivy poisoning are directed toward (1) relieving the discomfort till the disease runs its course, and (2) developing neutralizing substances in the blood of the victim.

Another, and preferable approach, (3) removing the cause, is here described because it is so simple and so effectual in cutting short the affliction.

The cause, an oleoresinous plant exudate, acts as an irritant as long as it is in contact with the skin, even in exceedingly minute quantity. This substance is not soluble in water; hardly at all in alcohol; is partially emulsifiable in soapsuds; is freely soluble in certain cleaning agents, notably benzene.

By mopping up small areas in series with individual benzene-soaked pledgets of cotton or small rags, discarding each pledget or rag after use, and

continuing until all affected surface has been so treated, a good deal of the offending irritant can be picked up and removed. A little gentle scrubbing makes the removal more complete. Of course, any previously applied coating of calamine, or other medicament, which merely covers the oleoresin and binds it into intimate contact with the skin, must be removed to get at the underlying toxin. On fairly fresh lesions this treatment is not particularly painful. After the skin is broken, the treatment becomes increasingly heroic—yet justifiable because of results.

After a session with benzene the part treated should be left exposed and fanned till the benzene is completely evaporated. Then a thorough lathering and hot showerbath (not *tub* bath) may follow. Then, if itching continues, full strength Dobell's solution may be daubed on *ad libitum* and allowed to dry, or may be used as a wet compress.

The whole process may have to be repeated a second or perhaps a third time, at intervals of a few hours, before enough of the oleoresin has been removed to allow healing; but when this is accomplished, regardless of the previous duration of the disease, twelve to thirty-six hours will see the healing stage well under way.

Sedatives, however, may have to be used during the treatment period.

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### HIPPOCRATES' APHORISMS\*

By MOSES SCHOLTZ, M. D.  
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#### SECTION FIVE (Continued)

47. A prolapsed womb  
With suppurating,  
Leads to sinus  
And ulceration.
48. A male fetus is located  
Most often to the right,  
While the female is found rather  
Moored to the left side.
49. A free expulsion of the placenta  
Can be produced with greater ease,  
If, with the mouth and nostrils shut,  
The woman can be caused to sneeze.
50. To stop the menses in a woman  
One should apply cups to the breasts.  
The largest cups're the most effective—  
So the experience attests.
51. In a state of pregnancy  
The mouth of the womb is closed.
52. If in a pregnant woman flabby breasts  
With milk secretion overflow,  
The fetus's weak, but firm breasts  
Suggests a healthy embryo.

\* For other aphorisms, see CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, March 1940, page 125; April 1940, page 179; May 1940, page 231; July 1940, page 35; August 1940, page 85; September 1940, page 130; December 1940, page 272; January 1941, page 27; February 1941, page 82; March 1941, page 124; April 1941, page 229.